

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-4 and 6-17 remain in the application. Claim 5 has been canceled. All of the remaining claims have been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, an amendment to eliminate the numeric references is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability. Additionally, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 5 and to define the invention more clearly. Claim 10 has been amended to correct what appears to have been grounds for a rejection under 35 USC 112. This is not a narrowing amendment.

The Examiner objected to the title as being insufficiently descriptive.

The title has been amended to provide the clarity requested by the Examiner.

All of the original claims were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Mase et al., U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0197915.

A rejection under 35 USC 102 requires the reference to show each of the features recited in the claims. The Mase et al. reference shows a retainer that is mounted sideways into a connector housing. The retainer has a main body that is received in an insertion hole in the housing and locks terminal fittings in the cavities. The retainer of Mase et al. also has a front wall that covers the front end of the housing. A reinforcement extends between the main body and the front wall along a top portion of the retainer. The retainer further has a sidewall extending along one side of the

retainer. The sidewall will be flush with one side of the housing when the retainer is mounted properly.

Amended claim 1 requires the housing to have a plurality of cavities arranged along an outer wall of the housing. The outer wall of the housing defined by amended claim 1 has a cut away portion adjacent the front end and opening into the cavities that extend along the outer wall of the housing. The retainer of amended claim 1 has main body, a front wall and at least one reinforcement projecting at an angle from front wall and extending substantially in a transverse direction. The reinforcement of amended claim 1 is accommodated in the cut-away portion formed in the outer wall of the housing adjacent the front end. The Mase et al. reference has no cut-away portion and no reinforcement accommodated in the cut-away portion. Hence, amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-4 and 6-10 are not anticipated by Mase et al.

Claim 11 is directed to a connector with a housing and a retainer. The retainer is defined as having a main body with opposite sides. Supports extend from the opposite sides of the main body of the retainer. A front wall spans between the front edges of the support and is supported substantially along the front end of the housing. Additionally, at least one reinforcement projects at an angle from the front wall and extends in the transverse direction between the supports. The Mase et al. reference has a retainer with an equivalent of the elongate main body having opposite sides. Mase et al. also has a front wall supported substantially along the front end of the housing and has one sidewall that extends between the main body and the front wall. The Mase et al. reference does not and cannot have two supports because of the way the Mase et al. retainer is mounted sideways into the housing. A second support or

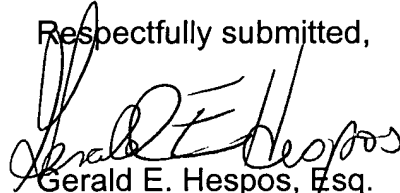
sidewall on the Mase et al. retainer will prevent the retainer from being mounted into the housing. The Mase et al. retainer also does not have at least one reinforcement projecting at an angle from the front wall and extending in the transverse direction between the supports or sidewalls of Mase et al. Hence, claim 11 and its dependent claims 12-17 is not anticipated by Mase et al. under 35 USC 102.

As noted above, a rejection under 35 USC 102 requires the reference to show each of the limitations recited in the claim. The Mase et al. reference clearly does not show each of the limitations recited in amended claims 1-4 and 6-10 nor each of the limitations recited in original claims 11-17. Accordingly, amended claims 1-4 and 6-10 and original claims 11-17 are not anticipated by Mase et al. It is also the opinion of counsel and the applicants that amended claims 1-4 and 6-10 and original claims 11-17 are not suggested by Mase et al. However, the Examiner is advised with respect, that the subject application is assigned to Sumitomo Wiring Systems, Ltd. as evidenced by documents recorded with the United States Patent and Trademark Office at Reel 14652, Frame 450. The face of the Mase et al. reference also shows that the reference is assigned to Sumitomo Wiring Systems, Ltd.

The above-captioned application claims priority on a Japanese application that was filed prior to the Mase et al. publication. Additionally, the above-captioned U.S. application was filed in the United States less than one year before the Mase et al. publication. Under these circumstances, it is believed that the provisions of 35 USC 103(c) apply and that the Mase et al. reference "shall not preclude patentability".

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all of the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Hespos", is written over the printed name.

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